

Public Safety Wellness Center

APRIL 26, 2017



Background

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In the 1990s, the Austin Fire Department and nine other U.S. cities partnered with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) to form the IAFF/IAFC Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative (WFI).



Background

AFD and EMS have worked on a program that addresses the following key points:

- Confidentiality of behavioral, medical, and fitness evaluations
- Physical Fitness and Wellness programs that are educational and rehabilitative, and not punitive
- Performance testing that promotes progressive wellness improvement
- Commitment by labor and management to a positive individualized fitness/wellness program

Background

There are five (5) components to the Wellness program:

- ▶ Medical Examinations
- ▶ Fitness Maintenance and Assessments
- ▶ Rehabilitation
- ▶ Behavioral Health
- ▶ Data Collection



Current Wellness Operations

- ▶ 14 full-time employees: Fire and EMS
- ▶ *7 documented saves - detection of a potentially terminal condition*
- ▶ In 2016...
 - *1649 medical exams performed*
 - *1844 fitness interventions*
 - *241 potential health issues identified that required follow-up. Down from 339 in 2013 due to on-going medical/fitness interventions and exams.*



Medical Services & Exposure Protocol

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- ▶ Annual medical exams: Fire, EMS, APD Bomb and SWAT (1649 cases)
- ▶ Cadet candidate medical exams (207 exams)
- ▶ Return to work and light duty (289 evaluations)
- ▶ Follow-up/case management (45 cases)
- ▶ Flu vaccine program (729 COA, 605 Fire, 132 EMS)
- ▶ Vaccinations (255 cases)
- ▶ Tuberculosis screening (1649 tests) and exposures (22 persons)

Fitness & Peer Fitness Trainers

- ▶ Fire Rehabilitation: 190 have cycled thru with 13 currently active
- ▶ Fitness assessments during annual physicals: 1242 and 1844 physical interventions
- ▶ Worked with Fire/EMS cadet academies to:
 - Reduce the number of injuries
 - Increase strength and recovery from day to day
 - Revised cadet manuals with info on exercise, recovery, nutrition, etc.
- ▶ Station visits to introduce new workout techniques
- ▶ Organize specialty clinics: lifting, rehab, rowing certification
- ▶ Peer Fitness Trainers (PFTs): 22 currently, adding 5 EMS/17 Fire in June
 - PFT assist in Fire Fit, FF Rehab, Academy PT, Station visits for fitness request

Rehabilitation Program

- ▶ Firefighter is cleared by physician to return to work with restrictions following an injury:
 - assigned to light or modified duty program - required to participate in rehab four times per week
 - meets with Exercise Physiologist and Dr. Parrish to design a rehab plan
 - attends supervised physical rehabilitation sessions with on-site Peer Fitness Trainer
 - once cleared for full duty by their physician, firefighters receives a final evaluation/consultation with Wellness staff
- ▶ EMS is exploring a similar rehabilitation program for Field Medics

Behavioral Services & Peer Support

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Psychologists provide:

- ▶ Counseling/mental health services to employees and their dependents
- ▶ Evaluation of cadet candidates
- ▶ Respond to critical events – nights and weekends when employee is in distress
- ▶ Outreach and training

Firefighter Peer Support Team (PST) provides emotional support and/or referrals and functions in two capacities:

- ▶ Team response based on the type and severity of the incident
- ▶ Individual PST member response to a request for personal support

Costs

► Salaries and Fringe

- Sworn \$369,110 (3 positions)
- Civilian \$905,040 (11 positions)

► Contractual services \$386,577

► Commodities/Other \$97,129



Why Wellness Center is Critical

- ▶ Prevention, early detection, and rehab keeps the workforce on-duty which lowers overall costs
- ▶ Managing employee records speeds response to injury and exposure
 - Access to records facilitates treatment of critical injuries
 - Protocol for potential exposure to HIV, Ebola, TB, and other infectious diseases

Why Wellness Center is Critical

- ▶ Using internal City resources for health management is more effective
 - Private physicians/practitioners do not have occupational knowledge to determine duty status
 - On-duty access to care encourages participation
 - Requiring annual exams from private physicians could result in reimbursements added to AFD bargaining agreements (EMS currently pays medics to get exams off-duty)

Future Plans for the Wellness Center

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- ▶ Expand to include Police
 - ▶ Explore billing United Healthcare for annual exams and preventative care
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